

Ghanaian Christianity between Cultural Tradition and Modernity

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Abstract

During five weeks of minor field studies in Ghana in the fall of 2007, I studied how three different churches relate to African cultural tradition and African modernity. As I was doing my studies, I stayed at Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission and Culture in Akropong, 55 kilometers from Accra, the capital of Ghana.

The churches that are carried out in the study have different historical backgrounds. The Presbyterian Church of Ghana was established out of the efforts of European missionaries who came to the country in the early nineteenth century. Musama Disco Christo Church is an African Indigenous Church that started in the 1920s out of a longing to express the African Cultural Tradition in church. Global Revival Ministries is a Charismatic church that was established in the 1980s.

The study is mainly based on interviews. In each one of the three churches, I interviewed one pastor and one more person, who was involved in some kind of leadership. Besides the six interviews, I have moreover made use of my own observations from the different churches, since I also visited each one of them. The empirical findings are then brought together with the theoretical background, mainly based on the book *Tradition and Modernity – Philosophical reflections on the African Experience* by the Ghanaian philosopher Kwame Gyekye.

The churches relates differently to African cultural tradition and African modernity. Their historical backgrounds seem to be a main factor in how they reflect on and express different African cultural values such as communal, family and aesthetical values. For example, while the indigenous Musama Disco Christo Church is trying to hold on to African expressions, the charismatic Global Revival Ministries think that those expressions do not appeal enough to Christians today. The Presbyterian Church, on the other hand, has been going through a process where African features have been accepted, after a long time of European influences in their church.

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Abbreviations:

ACI – Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission and Culture

AIC – African Indigenous Churches¹

ANDA – Akuapem Northern District Assembly

CPC – Christ Presbyterian Church

GRM – Global Revival Ministries

MDCC – Musama Disco Christo Church

PCG – Presbyterian Church of Ghana

¹ See note 17.

1. Introduction

1.1 General Introduction

Sitting in one of the Ghanaian public transport vans, (tro-tro's), on my way to Accra, the capital, I suddenly noticed how the women behind me were talking fascinated about, and touched my hair that was bothering me by flapping my face in the breath of the wind. Then one of them asked: *What do you like about us Ghanaians? I mean, we like everything about you; your hair, your language, your food, your skin, the way you dress.*

To make a field study is really fascinating, especially when hearing things and seeing things that are interesting for the topic of the research, when it is the least expected. Getting the opportunity to travel to Ghana to do field studies for five weeks in the end of 2007, I wanted to look at the notions of African culture and modernity.

The woman in the tro-tro seemed to like a lot of things about white, Western people; what we have, what we wear and what we do. She is expressing that there is something about our culture that she is looking up to and admires.

Every culture, through all times, has been influenced by other cultures. In different ways, all cultures have been changing and developing as they have been encountering each other. Ghana, as well as other African societies, is a developing country with a history of colonization, missionary work, and trading. In the process of creating their own modernity, the aftermaths of that part of the history are only a few of several factors affecting the development. There is also an aspect of the developing that occurs within the culture itself.

Within the notion of African culture and modernity, I wanted to know what it looks like in church. Are there for example, as the woman in the van expressed, only good things about other cultures which are affecting African modernity? Or are there also things they think are important to be aware of? The woman also asked: *What do you like about us Ghanaians?* The question is what the Ghanaians like about their own cultural tradition. What needs to be hold on to in the creation of modernity?

1.2 Research Questions

My main research question is:

- How do different churches in Ghana relate to African cultural tradition and to African modernity?

To clarify my research further I used the following questions:

1. How do the churches reflect on African cultural tradition and African modernity in their contexts?
2. How is African cultural tradition and African modernity expressed in their contexts?
3. How do they deal with the tension between African cultural tradition and African modernity in their contexts?

1.3 Methods, Resources and Way of Procedure

The main research for this paper was made in Ghana in November-December 2007. Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission and Culture (ACI), in Akropong-Akuapem was hosting us six students for five weeks. Through them and through people who in some way or another were connected to the institute, I got in touch with different informants for my study.

The research is first of all based on qualitative interviews. Describing different aspects of qualitative interviews, Steinar Kvale says that the aim of that kind of interviews is to get descriptions from the view of life of the informant, with the purpose to interpret the meaning of the phenomenon described.²

The interviews are supplemented with my own observations as I visited the churches and attended a Sunday morning service in each of them.

I chose to look at three churches that have different historical backgrounds. That way I got to study churches that hypothetically would differ in the area of cultural tradition and modernity.³ In each of these three churches, I have made interviews with two different people. One interview was done with one of the pastors of the church. The other person was chosen out of his or her involvement in some kind of leadership. In two of the churches I was able to meet with a woman. In Musama Disco Christo Church (MDCC) the second informant was a man, though, since I couldn't finish the interview with the woman appropriately because of difficulties in understanding the language.

Even though I was able to communicate properly with all of my informants, it needs to be borne in mind that this study was made in English, which is neither mine nor the informants' mother tongue. Although the cross cultural encounter is part of what is fascinating and even the point of doing field studies, I am aware of the confusions of language that unconsciously could appear in a project like this.

The theoretical part of the paper is mainly based on the book *Tradition and Modernity – Philosophical reflections on the African Experience*. In my analysis I brought together my empirical findings with the theoretical background out of that book and the general backgrounds.

1.4 Limitations

In my study I have been observing three different churches in the southern part of Ghana. It would have been interesting also to compare churches in other parts of the country. Up north, Christianity is not as spread as in the south and observing churches in rural areas further away from the capital may have given different results in the study. Observing more than one church from each denomination, would have given interesting comparisons also within the different church groups.

² Kvale, 1997, p. 35.

³ See further chapter 4.

1.5 Definitions

In order to clarify some definitions that are central in this paper, I will here give a brief summary about what is meant by them in the study.⁴

1.5.1 African Cultural Tradition

African cultural traditions are practices, values and beliefs which have been passed on and accepted over generations in Africa. Even though Africa is a big continent and consists of different cultures and societies, there are some basic values that they have in common. These values might, though, be understood and practiced in different ways.⁵

When different cultural traditions meet, they borrow elements from each other. Some elements are kept and passed on over generations and are molded together with the old values and beliefs of the tradition. Others are not being accepted over time and therefore not turned into a tradition. Each generation of people also creates cultural elements within their own context. But whether they are turned into a tradition depends on if they are being handed down to several generations or not. However, when a cultural practice, value or belief really has been passed on through several generations it has evolved into a tradition.⁶

1.5.2 African Modernity

Modernity is a notion that has been hard to define. However, the Ghanaian professor of philosophy Kwame Gyekye writes in his book *Tradition and Modernity – Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience* that he thinks that it can be defined as “the ideas, principles and ideals covering a whole range of human activities that have underpinned Western life and thought since the seventeenth century”.⁷

In their book *Politics and Culture in the Developing world: The Impact of Globalization*, Richard J Payne and Jamal R. Nassar writes on the notion of modernization processes in the developing world that “In developing a nation, new values, access to Western ways of life, and often less tolerance for traditional cultures often result. Modernization tends to homogenize cultures, destroy the boundaries that are essential to ethnic solidarity and a sense of identity, and create new identities and rearrange the boundaries.”⁸

In creating their own modernity, African countries are, because of for example colonialism, trading, and mission, affected by the notion of modernization. However, their modernizing processes are as well affected by changes and developments within their own culture. How the people and nations of Africa are to relate to their own cultural traditions in creating their modernity, is a subject for a debate that is going on.⁹

⁴ Further explanations are given in the theoretical background in chapter 3.

⁵ Gyekye, 1996, p. xiii.

⁶ Gyekye, 1997, p. 224-226.

⁷ Gyekye, 1997, p. 264.

⁸ Payne, 2008, p. 340.

⁹ See further in chapter 3.3.

1.6 Disposition

After the introduction, I will give a general background about the country of Ghana, where the studies were taking place. I will then focus on the church of Ghana in general, before moving the focal point to the history and characteristics of the specific churches that are examined in my study. The third chapter is a theoretical background where the notions of cultural tradition and modernity are clarified. Chapter four is a presentation of my empirical findings out of interviews and my own observations. The following chapter is an analysis of the results from the empirical findings brought together with the general and theoretical backgrounds. Finally I will have a concluding discussion, answering my research question.

2. General Background

To lay a foundation for the paper I will in this chapter give a general background of the country of Ghana and its history. After that I will give a picture of the different religious views and the spectrum of different churches that exist in Ghanaian Christianity.

As I then go on presenting the specific churches included in my study, I am aware of the fact that I am writing more extensively about the Presbyterian Church than about the other two. One reason is that it has a rich history and there is more written down about that church than about the others. To justify the unequal partition further, I also think that their fascinating history gives a picture of how Christianity and the Protestant churches in general were brought to and received by the people within the African cultural tradition of the nineteenth century.

2.1 Introduction to Ghana¹⁰

The country of Ghana is located by the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa. It has a population estimated to 20.2 million people (2002) and is divided into ten local regions. Surrounded by French speaking countries, Ghana is one of a few countries in the region that has English as its official language, since it was colonized by the United Kingdom until 1957. English as official language unites the people of Ghana, which is made up of about 50 different people groups, divided into four larger ethnical groups with their own languages. The major languages besides English are Akan, Ewe, Mole-Dagomba, and Ga.¹¹

When Ghana in 1957 became independent from the British colonial power it was the first country in the colonized Africa to achieve independence. The country, then named The Gold Coast, had been under European influence since the 15th century when the Europeans found out the lucrative area for trading gold, ivory, and slaves. In the beginning of the nineteenth century the British conquered out the other Europeans and after the fall of the Ashanti kingdom in 1901 the whole area, The Gold Coast, came under British control.¹²



¹⁰ The map is from www.ashantiafricantours.com/main/map_ghana.html 2008-01-23.

¹¹ *Länder i fickformat, Ghana*, 2004, p. 4.

¹² *Länder i fickformat, Ghana*, 2004, p. 8.

More than two thirds of the population is Christian and Christianity is strongest in the southern parts of the country. 15% of the Ghanaians are Muslims and Islam is particularly strong in the north and in the cities. In the very north, however, some people hold on to the traditional indigenous religions. Approximately 7% of the population is considered to belong to them. It is hard to estimate, though, since some people also mix Christian faith with traditional animistic beliefs.¹³

2.2 The Church in Ghana

Christianity is the fastest growing faith in Ghana and “Ghana’s ethos is recognizably Christian”, as stated by Africanist Paul Gifford.¹⁴ Traveling around in Ghana, it is not hard to note that his statement is true. With shops named for example “Jesus above all”, “In him is life” or “El-Shaddai medical laboratories” and cars with stickers like “I can’t live without Jesus” or “Jesus is love” people candidly show their beliefs. However, though it is frequently used in the south, traveling up north I noticed that that kind of expressions are not as common in the parts of the country where Islam is stronger. Christianity has increased in numbers over the years, from 52.65% of the population in 1970 to 75.6% in 1998/99. Even though it has reduced a bit to 69% in 2000, it is making gains over the other religious traditions, particularly the Traditional ones.¹⁵ This growth is seen most clearly in Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity, but there are a wide variety of churches in Ghana. This is because of the rapid proliferation of new churches and also as a result of schisms in some of the older churches. In order to get a better view of Christianity in Ghana, Cephas N. Omenyo¹⁶ has delineated some major strands of churches in historical and theological categories as follows, in chronological order:¹⁷ (The examples added in parenthesis are my own, since they are churches that I will look at in my study.)

1. *Mainline/historic churches*: this label refers to the older and generally larger churches, instituted as a result of European missionary endeavors in Ghana in the nineteenth century. (The Presbyterian Church of Ghana).
2. *African Indigenous Churches (AICs)*¹⁸: these originated in Ghana or from other African countries. (Musama Disco Christo Church).
3. *Classical Pentecostal Churches*: they began in the West in the early twentieth century and appeared on the Ghanaian religious scene in the 1920s.

¹³ *Länder i fickformat, Ghana*, 2004, p. 5.

¹⁴ Quoted in Omenyo, 2002, p. 34. Paul Gifford is a teacher at the Department for the Study of Religions at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, writing about African Christianity.

¹⁵ Omenyo, 2002, p. 34.

¹⁶ Cephas N. Omenyo is senior lecturer in African Christianity, Church History and New Religion Movements at the Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana. He has made a study about the development of Charismatic renewal in the Mainline Churches in Ghana.

¹⁷ Omenyo, 2006, p. 6.

¹⁸ The AICs are sometimes referred to as African ‘Independent’ Churches and sometimes as African ‘Indigenous’ Churches, which is confusing. Omenyo is referring the AICs to African ‘Independent’ Churches. The word ‘independent’ is used to indicate the church’s independence from mission control, consequently referring to those indigenous churches that emerged from within the mission churches. AICs in this paper are, however, mostly referred to African ‘Indigenous’ Churches; churches that are founded and administered by Africans.

4. *Neo-Evangelical/Mission-related Churches*: these are more recent evangelical churches which started in the 1970s, particularly in the Northern part of Ghana.

5. *Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches*: these churches started as a consequence of the evangelical/charismatic renewal in the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁹ (Global Revival Ministries).

6. *Neo-Prophetism*: this label refers to new manifestations of the AICs which began in the 1990s that combine features that are similar to those in the AICs and some features of Neo-Pentecostal Churches.

In the year of 2000 the statistics for the Christian denominations were as follows:²⁰

	Percentage of the population:
Catholics	15.3%
Protestants	18.6%
Pentecostal/Charismatics	24.1%
Other Christians	11%
Total:	69%

As Omenyo distinguished in his overview of the major strands of the Ghanaian churches, listed above, the so called mainline or historical churches were instituted as a result of European missionary endeavors in Ghana in the nineteenth century. However, the presence of Christianity in the country goes back as far as to the fifteenth century when the Europeans built forts along the coast. The Portuguese, who were the first to arrive, brought a few missionaries of the Portuguese Order of Christ. At the castles and forts, there were furthermore European catechists and teachers as well as Africans and mulattos who went back to teach after being educated abroad. These coastal forts were, however, an altogether closed world, with no religious contact with the inland people.²¹ Visiting these forts with churches in the middle of the complex and listening to the stories of the horrible conditions around the slave trade, makes me somehow relieved that the Europeans did not do any hard efforts on the missionary field during that time. Instead, Christianity made its entry in the early nineteenth century and one of the first churches to be established was the Presbyterian Church of Ghana.

2.2.1 Presbyterian Church of Ghana

With a history that starts when the first missionaries arrived as early as in 1828, the Presbyterian Church was one of the first mainline Protestant Churches to be established in Ghana (then called Gold Coast). Missionaries from the Basel, Bremen, Methodist and Anglican Missions worked in Ghana in the early part of the nineteenth century. The category of mainline Protestant denominations also includes The Methodist Church Ghana, The Evangelical Presbyterian Church, The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, The Baptist Church, and The Anglican Church. All these mainline Protestant churches belong to the Christian Council of Ghana which was formed in 1929 as a fellowship of churches.²²

¹⁹ Omenyo, 2002, p. 96.

²⁰ Omenyo, 2002, p. 35.

²¹ Sundkler, 2000, p. 46-47.

²² Omenyo, 2006, p. 7.

Walking the streets of Akropong, in the Akuapem Mountains, in the year of 2007, it hit me what big difference it is for me to walk around in the area, compared to the conditions for the Danish missionary Andreas Riis who reached the area in the early nineteenth century. I got on an airplane in Sweden in the morning and arrived 15 hours later at the Akrofi-Christaller Institute in Akropong, Ghana. Riis arrived at the Gold Coast probably after several weeks on a boat. Without risking my life, other than once in a while in the risky and busy traffic, I left the country a few weeks later with the return ticket I had bought in advance. Riis probably had in mind that his trip could be for life and had no idea when he would get to see his family back home in Denmark again, if ever. With tremendous risks for his own life, he arrived in Africa in 1832 together with two other missionaries. As for the four precursors, the two friends' deeds on the missionary field ended as they died shortly after their arrival. Riis, however, was cured from malaria by a native herbalist and could continue his work.²³

Twelve years later, the Basel Mission Committee considered abandoning the missionary work in the Gold Coast. Seven of the missionaries had died and not a single convert to Christianity was reported. But Andreas Riis refused to give up and with the approval of the Basel Committee, he moved from the coast to Akropong in the Akuapem Mountains. The reason for that was not only that the higher location offered a healthier climate. He would also be able to work among the indigenous people who had not been in touch with the Europeans on the coast with their immoral style of life. Besides, in Akropong he would not be accused for being an agent of the colonial powers.²⁴

On his arrival in Akropong, Andreas Riis was warmly welcomed by the paramount chief Nana Addo Dankwa I.²⁵ He was offered accommodations and was later, on his request, given a piece of land on which he built a mission station. However, the chief told him that he was not interested in his religion, because when God created the world, he gave the Bible to the white man, and the fetish to the black man. If Riis was able to show him a black person who had become a Christian, he and his people would be Christians. That pronouncement started up a new strategy of the Basel Mission's activities in the area. In the spring of 1843 six families and three young men were recruited from the Jamaica and Antigua. This group of West Indies was a group of second and third generation liberated Christian African slaves.²⁶

The West Indian missionaries settled in Akropong, but their work was not very successful. In the 1850s more Swiss and German missionaries were sent to the field. Among them were Rev. J. G. Christaller and Rev. Johannes Zimmerman. The local vernacular was important to the Basel mission and these men put a lot of hard work on developing the local languages. Christaller was, together with African collaborators, working on the Akan Twi language and made a translation of the Bible, whereas Zimmerman developed the Ga language which is the language of the Ga people by the coast.²⁷

Zimmerman is described as "the remarkable missionary who, perhaps more than others strove to become an African to Africans".²⁸ In *A History of the Church in Africa* it is told that he

²³ Beeko, 2004, p. 3.

²⁴ Beeko, 2004, p. 4.

²⁵ The Akan society has a system of chieftaincy. The paramount chief "rules" together with the Queen Mother over 17 towns and villages in the Akuapem Mountains.

²⁶ Beeko, 2004, p. 6-7.

²⁷ Sundkler, 2000, p. 207-208.

²⁸ Sundkler, 2000, p. 210.

became so identified with the people that, in cases of illness, he consulted the African ‘nature doctors’, as he called them. He also thought that it was important not to just adopt European ideals into the Ghanaian culture. “When introducing ‘divine law’ in Africa, the missionaries must derive this law not from Church tradition in Europe, he suggested, but exclusively from the Bible. The traditional social order in Ghana was closer to family law in old Israel than to Western traditions and was therefore preferable to European ideals.”²⁹

Because of World War I, the then British Colony would not have citizens of an enemy country in the territory and the Basel Missionaries were suddenly deported in 1917. Before they left they placed African pastors and elders in charge of different districts and set up a church authority. When missionaries from The Scottish Mission soon afterwards arrived, they organized the church further to become a self-governing and independent Presbyterian Church.³⁰ In 1926 the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG) was given full authority and became autonomous, even though missionaries stayed in the country as advisers and guides of the Africans. They still contributed to discussions at the highest court of the church, called the Synod.³¹

The mainline churches continued to expand and were involved in social services like education³², health care, and agricultural projects.³³ Even though they became autonomous, they still got financial support from the mission bodies that founded them. Omenyo explains that:

Much of this support was necessary, in most cases due to the weak financial positions of the churches, but it had a negative effect of constituting enough incentive not to deviate from the traditions and ethos established by respective forebears. Orthodoxy was determined by how well one was loyal to the traditions and patterns that had been laid down by the missionaries and not how faithful one was in incarnating the Scripture into the cultural context.³⁴

For example when it comes to music, until the mid twentieth century they just translated the European hymns into the local languages and continued to play the organ. The use of local musical instruments was despised since they were associated with traditional African worship. In 1911, a Basel Mission teacher was excluded from the Presbyterian Church because he was holding a party at where they were dancing. One man at the local PCG at Akropong was banned from preaching because he was wearing traditional clothes when he was preaching.³⁵

2.2.2 Musama Disco Christo Church

Musama Disco Christo Church (MDCC) (translated: Army of the Cross of Christ Church) is one of the oldest indigenous churches in Ghana. Like most other independent movements, it began as a prayer group within a mainline church. The indigenous churches are therefore often characterized negatively as separatists. That is a classification that most of the leaders of

²⁹ Sundkler, 2000, p. 210.

³⁰ Beeko, 2004, p. 9-10.

³¹ Omenyo, 2002, p. 64. Since August 2001 the Synod is replaced by the General Assembly.

³² The first institution of higher learning in Ghana was the Presbyterian Training College in Akropong, founded in 1848. (170 years Anniversary of Akropong Christ Church, 2005, p. 58).

³³ Omenyo, 2002, p. 64.

³⁴ Omenyo, 2002, p. 64.

³⁵ Omenyo, 2002, p. 65.

these denominations dislike, since the term is somewhat negative and not every Indigenous Church seceded from Mission Churches.³⁶

Most of the AICs, though, were established out of some kind of rebellion against a Christianity that had become “over-Europeanised”³⁷. Quite a number of leaders of the independent movement criticized the leadership of the Mission Churches whom they claimed wanted the African converts to follow European customs and traditions. Therefore these movements wanted to consider the African culture and religious consciousness. They wanted African institutions to be recognized and respected in church. If the foreign religious institutions did not meet the African daily experience of life, they felt it would create a spiritual hunger in Africans. Consequently, the liturgy in the AICs was made more African and they started using drumming, singing, and dancing which were parts of African cultural manifestations.³⁸ According to Rev. Oduro, Principal of Good News Theological College and Seminary³⁹, the introduction of these features into the church caused the persecution which the AICs were exposed to in their beginning. They were accused of being theologically incorrect. Nowadays, however, there are almost no services at all, in any kind of church, without these sorts of expressions.⁴⁰

Even though the different AICs differ from each other, they have some common identities which are said to distinguish them from the mainline churches. These common identities include their passion for prayer, emphasis on the spiritual, interest in divine healing, and the Old Testament influences.⁴¹ Rev. Thomas A. Oduro says that the AICs have contributed immeasurably in certain areas of African Christianity, though not all of them have been given any acknowledgement from the wider church. Besides liturgical contributions as far as dancing and style of music being used in services, he mentions the contribution of the concept of church. The AICs base their concept on the extended African family. They regard each other as blood related members of a big family and “are closely knit together”. African family values have been inculcated into the church.⁴² Moreover, in mid-nineteenth century, the secretary of the Church Mission Society, Henry Venn, emphasized in his seventh mission principle that “native agency is basic to the development of the Mission in Africa.”⁴³ According to Rev. Oduro that dream ultimately came true in the AICs.

Another contribution that Rev. Oduro mentions is that of architecture of Christian worship centers. Building centers according to their own local architecture, the AICs have also

³⁶ Ayegboyin, 1997, p. 12.

³⁷ Ayegboyin, 1997, p. 24.

³⁸ Ayegboyin, 1997, p. 24-25.

³⁹ Good News Theological College and Seminary was founded by an American Mennonite who came to Ghana in the 1960s to do a research of the indigenous churches. Noticing the theological needs, he started Bible studies for their leaders. Today the seminary is unique of the whole of Africa and runs a Diploma program as well as a Bachelor of Theology program with students from both indigenous and mainline churches. There is a project going on to bring the indigenous and mainline churches together in unity. (Conversation with Oduro, 2007-11-19).

⁴⁰ Conversation with Oduro, 2007-11-19.

⁴¹ Ayegboyin, 1997, p. 33.

⁴² Oduro n d, p. 4.

⁴³ Ayegboyin, 1997, p. 22.

influenced churches established through Western missionaries to build centers that do not follow the pattern of Western Christian architecture.⁴⁴

A further important contribution, which according to Rev. Oduro is acknowledged, is the liberation of women. While the mainline churches were debating on the scriptural appropriateness of ordaining women, the AICs have been encouraging women to participate in the ministry of the Church. Rev. Oduro stresses that the Christian theology of equality of the genders in African Christianity was emphasized by the AICs.⁴⁵

As stated above, Musama Disco Christo Church is one of the oldest indigenous churches in West Africa. It started as a prayer group in the Methodist Church in 1919, from which the founder, a Methodist teacher and catechist, later was dismissed when he refused to obey the order to stop his “occult practices” of for example divine healing and speaking in tongues. The MDCC was officially established as a church in 1922 and has practices that could be traced back to various religious traditions. Old Testament religious practices are foundational and normative, but there is also a mixture of Methodist, Catholic and African traditional customs.⁴⁶ The Methodist influences can be seen in the way the Church is organized and they are also using the Methodist Hymn Book, written in the Fante language.⁴⁷ The use of rosary while meditating is a practice that MDCC has borrowed from the Catholic tradition.

2.2.3 Global Revival Ministries

In the late 1960s and 1970s Ghanaian Christianity experienced an evangelical/charismatic revival outside the established churches. It resulted in different non-denominational fellowships in many parts of the country. Some of the fellowships stressed that the members should not leave the mainline churches but stay and revitalize them.⁴⁸ Others institutionalized into churches. Completely new and independent neo-Pentecostal churches also developed as a consequence of the evangelical/charismatic renewal and are in Ghana known as charismatic churches or ministries. What distinguishes these churches from the classical Pentecostal Churches are that the members are predominantly youths, they primarily use the English language in their services and the style of music and preaching is often an adoption of American neo-Pentecostal style of worship.⁴⁹

Rev. Thomas Oduro says that another thing that distinguishes the Charismatic churches is that they often preach wealth and health. He puts that in contrast to the AICs who are preaching “closer to God even in poverty”. He says that the Charismatic churches are more westernized than others. There is often one first pastor assisted by younger pastors. In African culture the elderly persons come first, then the pastor, in terms of who people contact for counseling, according to Rev. Oduro. When the young pastors take over the role as counselors from the

⁴⁴ Oduro n d, p. 6.

⁴⁵ Oduro n d, p. 7.

⁴⁶ Ayegboyin, 1997, p. 116.

⁴⁷ Fante is the language used in MDCC, no matter where in the country the specific church is located. Fante is the language of the part of the Central Region where MDCC was founded and is therefore the language being used.

⁴⁸ Omenyo, 2002, p. 95.

⁴⁹ Omenyo, 2002, p. 96.

older generation, Rev. Oduro thinks that old people do not feel comfortable. He thinks that is probably one reason why there are not many old people in charismatic churches.⁵⁰

Global Revival Ministries was founded in 1983, by Rev. Dr. Robert Ampiah-Kwofi. It was founded out of a “burning call for a world revival Christianity”.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Conversation with Oduro, 2007-11-19.

⁵¹ Interview with Rev. John Neeman-Quarshie, 2007-11-21, p. 2.

3. Theoretical Background

In my theoretical background I will primarily start out from Kwame Gyekye's *Tradition and Modernity – Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience*. Kwame Gyekye is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Ghana and has written books on African and Arabic Philosophy. In *Tradition and modernity* he philosophically addresses problems that afflict postcolonial African states. Gyekye states that in attempting to enter or create modernity in their own ways, the African people face several unique societal challenges that stems both from traditional African values and practices and European cultural values and institutions, due to the European colonial rule.⁵² In my study I will not look into his chapters about politics and nation-building, but focus on what he says about the relationship of tradition to modernity and the threat to traditional moral and social values and practices in the wake of rapid social change. Since the author considers the postcolonial experiences to be largely common, he focuses the entire sub-Saharan Africa in his book. But when it comes to practices of traditional African societies, he draws most of his examples from the traditional Akan society⁵³, which is one of the largest people groups of Ghana, as well as in the part of the country where my own studies were taking place.

After the philosophical discussion about cultural tradition, I will then also use Kwame Gyekye's *African Cultural Values – an introduction*, to present some tangible features of the African culture. In that book, Kwame Gyekye has listed features that he thinks are of positive range, though not perfect. They are features that are not necessarily unique to Africa, but that he thinks ought to be revived or maintained also in the circumstances of the modern world. I have chosen to focus on some features that I think are relevant to my study in a church context. After having defined also the notion of modernity out of Gyekyes *Tradition and Modernity*, I will then look at different attitudes toward the cultural past which he states as prevailing in matters of creation of African modernity.

3.1 Cultural Tradition

Writing about the notion of tradition, Gyekye is sorting out the confusion about the definitions of “culture” and “tradition”. Even though they do not mean exactly the same, they are often used as if they do. Gyekye presents three different definitions of tradition. H.B. Acton, a British philosopher, defines tradition as “a belief or practice transmitted from one generation to another and accepted as authoritative, or deferred to, without argument.”⁵⁴ Edward Shils, who is an American sociologist, defines tradition as “anything which is transmitted or handed down from the past to the present.”⁵⁵ Samuel Fleischacker defines it as “practices – rituals, customs, superstitions – that are passed down... from generation to generation.”⁵⁶ All three of them describe what is generally considered to be the meaning of the Latin word *traditum* – which means that something is handed down from the past. Gyekye stresses though, quoting Shils, that the practice or belief handed down from the past has to last “over at least three generations”⁵⁷ to be considered a tradition. Each generation of people creates cultural

⁵² Gyekye, 1997, p. vii.

⁵³ Gyekye, 1997, p. xii.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Gyekye, 1997, p. 219.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Gyekye, 1997, p. 219.

⁵⁶ Quoted in Gyekye, 1997, p. 220.

⁵⁷ Quoted in Gyekye, 1997, p. 219.

practices and beliefs, but whether they are turned into a tradition depends on if they are being handed down to several generations or not. However, when a cultural value really has been passed on through several generations it has evolved into a tradition and the tradition can be said to be the culture. When this happens, says Gyekye, tradition and culture meet and the expressions “traditional culture” or “cultural tradition” make sense. However, he continues that “it would be more correct to say that culture constitutes the content of tradition, that tradition consists of – is the bearer of – those cultural products that have persisted over generations of people.”⁵⁸

To be brief, some cultural practices are preserved and become over time cultural traditions, while others are being abandoned. Moreover, some of the cultural traditions that last will be molded over time and sometimes they need to be improved and new aspects are then added. Gyekye thinks that there are two main factors to that. One is internal criticism of the tradition and the other is the adding of ideas, values and practices from another culture, which seem to be beneficial within the own culture.⁵⁹ Any encounter between different cultural traditions will result in one tradition borrowing elements from another. That could either happen voluntarily or through some sort of coercion. “But in order for the adopted elements of the alien tradition to be most beneficial to an indigenous tradition, the latter will have to shape, assimilate, and appropriate them not only to suit its ideals, purposes, and aspirations but also to function effectively and with success”.⁶⁰ That is not always the case, particularly not when the foreign elements are forced onto an indigenous culture. People in those cultures could be uncomfortable with them and could basically find themselves confused in the peripheries of the alien tradition. Besides, it cannot be predicted for how long the imposed tradition will endure in its new cultural environment, since the people may not understand it and therefore have little commitment to it, if they are committed to it at all.⁶¹ On the other hand, when a culture accepts a foreign idea or value, it will over time be molded together with the older elements of that cultural tradition. Together they will form and influence the people that are using them and the new values will no longer be alien to that culture.⁶²

Gyekye is in his book *African Cultural Values – an introduction* describing different African cultural values. I have chosen to look closer to some of them.

Aesthetical values. The elements that are traditionally appreciated and enjoyed in African culture include music and dancing, among other things. Compared with the European emphasis on “art for art’s sake”, in the Akan concept of art, which many would regard as representative for most of Africa, the aesthetic value is determined by its functional or symbolic aspect. Nevertheless, music and dancing can also be enjoyed without a functional use, called “items of beauty”. An outstanding feature in the traditional African society though, is the participatory character; everybody takes part in music and dancing. Also ways of dressing is aesthetically valued in the African culture. It is important to dress appropriate to the occasion and tight dresses worn by women are not considered appropriate.⁶³

⁵⁸ Gyekye, 1997, p. 220-221.

⁵⁹ Gyekye, 1997, p. 222.

⁶⁰ Gyekye, 1997, p. 224.

⁶¹ Gyekye, 1997, p. 225.

⁶² Gyekye, 1997, p. 226.

⁶³ Gyekye, 1996, p.125-128.

Language. Culture as a complex phenomenon is constituted of numerous elements, of which language is a very important one. Gyekye states it as “a vehicle of culture” and that a culture can best and most visibly be expressed through a common language.⁶⁴

Communal, individualistic and family values. African society places a great deal of emphasis on communal values. “The communal structure of African society has created a sense of community that characterizes social relations among individual members of the African society. This sense of community is an enduring feature of the African social life on which many writers on Africa have remarked.”⁶⁵ However, the communal system does not exclude individualistic values.⁶⁶ The individual cannot develop outside the framework of the community, as well as the community is dependent on the contributions of its individual members. Gyekye stresses the importance of a balance between the two different values. He fears, though, that “the cultural changes that are most likely to be occasioned by urbanization and the transformation of the pristine socio-economic situations can be expected to affect the balance between the two claims, perhaps tilting it more in favor of individualism.”⁶⁷ He says that it is important that African people and their cultures resist the extreme individualism which will only lead to lonely people in their societies and a breakdown of their own values.

The importance of the family is an outstanding feature of the communal structure of the African society. Speaking of family in an African context, it is a common knowledge that it is about the extended family system and not the nuclear family only consisting of a mother, a father and their children. The extended family consists of a large number of people. They are related by blood through a common ancestor and they feel a great responsibility towards one another.⁶⁸ A marriage is not only an affair between two individuals, but something that is of deep interest of and a contract between both families. In bringing up children, character development and instructing them in the values of the society are very important aspects. Children are generally expected to live in the family house until they marry, even if they are over eighteen. The parents never totally stop showing interest in their dealings and always want to offer advice and guidance, because as parents they always consider themselves as having more experience than their children.⁶⁹ Conversely, people that are older are supposed to be respected and cared for. Gyekye mentions that some people believes that when becoming industrialized and “advanced”, African societies will become more individualistic and therefore have less time for others, show less interest in and not care as much about the welfare of others. If the family system would be broken up it would destroy the important support for people’s moral behavior. He thinks though, that as we as human beings are the creators of technology, we should also be able to resist those consequences.⁷⁰

3.2 Modernity

Because it is, by its nature, very complex and controversial, the notion of modernity has not been easy for neither Western nor non-Western intellectuals to define. The complexity seems,

⁶⁴ Gyekye, 1997, p. 93.

⁶⁵ Gyekye, 1996, p. 35.

⁶⁶ Gyekye, 1996, p. 35.

⁶⁷ Gyekye, 1996, p. 51.

⁶⁸ Gyekye, 1996, p.75.

⁶⁹ Gyekye, 1996, p.85.

⁷⁰ Gyekye, 1996, p.90-91.

according to Gyekye, to spring from the fact that modernity in its essence is a cultural phenomenon and that culture itself is a complex concept. The controversial nature, he thinks, stems from the fact that there are moral conditions that are associated with cultural systems. For example, many who are attracted to modernity in general may not be attracted to the feature of individualism, which has had an impact on the modernity of the Western societies.⁷¹

However complex and controversial, modernity can, according to Gyekye, be defined as “the ideas, principles and ideals covering a whole range of human activities that have underpinned Western life and thought since the seventeenth century”.⁷² Listing some of these ideas, principles and ideals that have formed modernity since the seventeenth century, the author mentions for example the medieval technology, scientific developments and achievements of seventeenth-century Europe, the technology and industrial revolution of the eighteenth century, the social and economic changes after the practice of capitalism in the seventeenth century and the emphasis on individual responsibility that followed the so called Protestant ethic of the Reformation. Even though these components were cooperating in forming modernity between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, the intellectual impulse of several of the factors can be traced to the Middle Ages or further back in history. Humanism, for example, which Gyekye names as “the fundamental principle and the intellectual, perhaps also ideological, engine of modernity”⁷³, can be traced to ancient Greek thought. He says that it was not a creation of modernity, but modernity exploited it.⁷⁴

For more than a century, the notion of modernity has been very important for the entire world. All societies want to become modern socially, culturally and politically. Gyekye continues:

Western societies generally, from which the notion of modernity is said to have emerged, have the quintessence of modernity, the mecca to which peoples from non-Western societies go for inspiration and knowledge as to models of thought and action in pursuit of the development of their societies and transition to modernity.⁷⁵

The notion of modernity gives an impression, says Gyekye, that the elements are totally European, which is false. Even if it was European from the beginning and in its advancement, modernity also contains elements that are traditional and inherited from previous generations of the European civilization. Furthermore it has also been affected by elements from non-European cultural traditions, brought back to Europe by, for example, colonizers.⁷⁶

While non-Western societies would be impressed by the material progress – progress based on economic prosperity – they may not be captivated by the individualism or the antisupernaturalism, which Gyekye states as some of “Western modernity’s principles or basic ideas”.⁷⁷ As early Western modernity was influenced by the humanistic view, he says that it also lead to an individualistic lifestyle, instead of a communal. In the pre modern era of Western cultural development, however, humanism and communitarian lifestyle were

⁷¹ Gyekye, 1997, p. 264.

⁷² Gyekye, 1997, p. 264.

⁷³ Gyekye, 1997, p. 265.

⁷⁴ Gyekye, 1997, p. 264-265.

⁷⁵ Gyekye, 1997, p. 263.

⁷⁶ Gyekye, 1997, p. 269.

⁷⁷ Gyekye, 1997, p. 270.

connected. But in the modern age the communitarian doctrine was dropped and replaced by individualism by John Locke and other “apostles of individualism”.⁷⁸

The advanced technology, which is a part of modernity in Western society, has resulted in the creation of jobs in urban centers. A modern state cannot avoid the urbanization; neither can the creation of modern Africa avoid that development. Gyekye thinks, though, that African modernity would be more desirable if the urbanization did not result in the breakup of community life into individualistic “lonely crowds”.⁷⁹

3.3 Attitudes toward Cultural Tradition and Modernity

The ideas of how the people and nations of Africa should relate to cultural traditions and modernity differ. There are those who assert that it is necessary to return to the past of the indigenous culture. Gyekye quotes N. K. Dzobo who thinks that it is needed in order to “...march into the future with confidence and with a sense of commitment to our cultural heritage.”⁸⁰ In Ghana, the term often used for this kind of philosophy of cultural revivalism is *Sankofa*, from the Akan word, meaning ‘to return for it’. Those who advocate this view have different arguments to it. For example, they think that there is a certain way of thinking, due to the colonial role, that would make people look at the foreign cultural elements as more important than those of their own culture.⁸¹ Focusing on the own cultural identity of a group would instead unite them as a people and be important for the building of their own nation.⁸²

Gyekye makes a distinction between “naïve Sankofaism” and “critical Sankofaism”. He means that the latter attitude is “the objective, unemotional and appropriate approach to adopt toward inherited cultural traditions.”⁸³ Gyekye thinks that it “involves a thorough, rational and normative examination of the values, practices and institutions of the cultural past in terms of the demands or situations of modern life - the life of today.”⁸⁴ In contrast, the naïve Sankofaism refers to a “wholesale and indiscriminate praise for, and acceptance of, the African cultural heritage.”⁸⁵ The opposite of that is what the author describes as “naïve anti-Sankofaism”. That is sort of an “anti-revivalism” that involves a “wholesale, indiscriminate condemnation or rejection of a cultural heritage.”⁸⁶

The arguments of the anti-revivalist are that the values of the traditional cultures can not get along with the modernity and the scientific era. They think that the African cultures are too pre-scientific and are only able to put up with simple technology. Therefore, if African nations will ever get to the level of the industrialized part of the world, they think they have to throw away most of their cultural heritage.⁸⁷

⁷⁸ Gyekye, 1997, p. 288.

⁷⁹ Gyekye, 1997, p. 276.

⁸⁰ Quoted in Gyekye, 1997, p. 233.

⁸¹ Gyekye, 1997, p. 234.

⁸² Gyekye, 1997, p. 235.

⁸³ Gyekye, 2004, p. 73.

⁸⁴ Gyekye, 2004, p. 73.

⁸⁵ Gyekye, 2004, p. 73.

⁸⁶ Gyekye, 2004, p. 73.

⁸⁷ Gyekye, 1997, p. 235.

Gyekye thinks that none of these naïve views can be justified. Neither the condemnation nor the exaltation of the cultural heritage is a practicable way of proceeding into the future. Instead he thinks that if cultural elements are to be valued reasonably, the experiences of the practice of different aspects in the tradition over the years need to be examined.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Gyekye, 2004, p. 72-73.

4. Empirical Findings

In the following part of the paper I will present the results from the interviews that I made during my stay in Ghana in November-December 2007. As I have mentioned above, I have interviewed six people from three different churches. Since the topic of my research is about “African traditional culture” and “African modernity” I have chosen churches that hypothetically differ largely in these aspects. Musama Disco Christo Church was founded in 1922 out of a longing to “re-assert the value of African institutions and customs in the face of what was considered to be an all-to-discriminate rejection of them in favor of European ways.”⁸⁹ That church stands in this research in contrast to Global Revival Ministries, founded 1983, that predominantly uses the English language in their services and in many ways has adopted American Pentecostal expressions and ways of being a church. Hypothetically the Christ Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Church of Ghana takes a position in the middle of the other ones on a presumed line of tradition - modernity. Established by Europeans in the nineteenth century, they have been going through a process of re-evaluation of features of African culture in church.

4.1 Christ Presbyterian Church, Akropong⁹⁰

The Presbyterian Church is one of the first mainline/historic churches that were established in Ghana.⁹¹ The historic churches were instituted as a result of European missionary endeavors in Ghana in the nineteenth century and The Presbyterian Church was established by the Basel Mission, Switzerland. The point of interest of this church in the research is that it, due to its heritage, probably has got early European influences. Moreover, as established 1835, Christ Presbyterian Church of Akropong was the very first congregation of Presbyterian Church of Ghana.

The people I interviewed are:

Rev. George Kwapong, District Minister of CPC, Akropong, since 2003.

Mrs. Joyce Vera Offei, senior Presbyterian of CPC, Akropong.⁹²

Christ Presbyterian Church (CPC) in Akropong has today officially around eighteen hundred registered members. About seven or eight hundred people are attending an average Sunday morning service. Akropong itself has a population of about 10 000 people.⁹³ Every other month they also have a service on Thursday mornings for aged people who are sick, or for other reasons cannot come regularly on Sunday mornings. They are picked up and taken to church for a service for elderly with Communion.

⁸⁹ Ayegboyin, 1997, p. 120.

⁹⁰ Interviews through this chapter are held with Rev. George Kwapong, 2007-12-03, p. 1-7 and Mrs. Joyce Vera Offei, 2007-12-05, p. 1-6.

⁹¹ Omenyo, 2006, p. 7.

⁹² The current session of Presbyters comprises 11 women and 10 men. They are elected by the congregation and shall hold office for four years, be eligible for re-election and not hold office for more than two consecutive terms. The Presbyters are to join hands with the Minister and Catechists for governing and discipline of the church. (Presbyterian Church of Ghana, 170 years Anniversary of Akropong Christ Church, 2005, p. 40).

⁹³ ANDA, Akropong, December 2007.

When visiting CPC, Akropong, the first thing I noticed is that it is hosted in a large building with a tall steeple that raises high above the surrounding houses of the town. The two-story stone building was completed in 1868.⁹⁴ The architecture is distinctly inspired by European mid-nineteenth century style. Inside, there are wooden benches and even the pictures on the walls and the altarpiece are influenced by the Western part of the world. Rev. George Kwapong, District Minister of CPC, Akropong, accentuates the fact that it sometimes could be an obstacle: *The pictures you see on the walls, like Jesus, maybe having the last supper with Peter and James, or James and John. They are all white people. You see, that all the time, every picture about Jesus, he is a white man. And therefore, for some people, it puts them off. Because they cannot identify with an unknown person, somebody they do not know.*

The dresses that people attending church are wearing are of different kinds. There are men wearing suits, while others have put on a more typical African garment. Rev. Kwapong explains that the church's understanding and especially the church leadership's understanding of the cultural practices are changing. Wearing a long, white, typical African cloth during our interview, he says that *they are not the same as they used to be. (...) Previously I could not have put this on. (...) I had to be in suit as a pastor. And I can wear this and nobody would say anything. I can take this to the church.* He explains that the European missionaries could not distinguish what was purely culture and what had to do with the rituals. Without understanding the culture of the people *everything African and everything indigenous was thrown overboard.*

The fact that there has been a change during the past few years in the Presbyterian Church, when it comes to understanding the African way of culture, can be understood while visiting the church. That can for example be seen in the style of music. Dancing and drumming is nowadays a common feature in services, besides the use of organ and singing of European hymns. *Now, we can do that,* says Rev. Kwapong about dancing and using traditional drums, *because we know the one is not fetish, there is no idol in playing drums. Until recently, we did not have this kind of shirt that you see, playing the kind of songs that we sing and dance. Everything was the hymn and the organ.* Mrs. Joyce Vera Offei, senior Presbyterian of CPC thinks that the attitudes towards the African traditional culture basically had to change. In the beginning, the church was singing hymns with a European tune, even though the lyrics were in Twi. *But as time went on, the churches found out that some of the hymns were too slow. (...) The newly created churches, the Pentecostal churches, the Charismatic churches were using our own songs. It [sic] can be used in dancing. So we saw that most of the youths were moving towards that way and we were losing members. So we brought in the traditional ones, the 'dondo'⁹⁵, the dance and the drums and the songs which are outside our churches.* She stresses though, that it is *only if gospel is in it.* Also Rev. Kwapong explains that the typical African way of doing things, that came in with the Pentecostal churches about fifty years ago, appealed more to people. When people left the Presbyterian Church to go to such churches, the issue came up at a national level. However, it was a *very, very, very big thing* for the church leaders when people said they wanted to dance and clap in church. According to Rev. Kwapong, a moderator said: *Okay, you can sing the way you want to sing, but to bring these drums to the chapel; I do not think that is good.*

⁹⁴ 170 years Anniversary of Akropong Christ Church, 2005, p. 15.

⁹⁵ 'Dondo' is a special kind of a traditional African drum.

Even though many of the hymns that are sung have a distinct European tune, the lyrics are in the Twi language. Also the sermons are mostly held in this vernacular. Mrs Offei says that they might say some comments in English when there are white people visiting, but the sermon itself is preached in Twi. Rev. Kwapong thinks that the use of the mother tongue is important, even though English is not a bad thing. But the fact is that using the local vernacular communicates to the heart of people when they understand the expressions.

Reading several Ghanaian books it is striking how Akan proverbs are commonly used and that they are something important within the culture. That is also strongly confirmed in the interviews. Mrs. Offei says that they are *very important* when one wants people to understand a passage in the Bible. *We believe in proverbs. We believe in proverbs.* She explains that people really like proverbs. *You see them laughing and clapping hands at that.* Rev. Kwapong tells about two students from Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey, USA who came to CPC for their summer internship in the summer of 2007. One of them *had realized the power of proverbs in the language and for the first time that she was going to preach, she tried to summarize the sermon to a friend, who got a suitable proverb for her. And so, she got up there... and that was the first time. And the moment she said that, they loved and appreciated and followed her. It was a very good sermon that was well prepared and well delivered.*

The Ghanaian society has a strong structure of the extended family system, but Mrs. Offei says there is a change because of the Western culture. *It's changing, it's changing, but I do not like it.* She explains that the father of the family is now looking after only the closest part of the family, not the whole extended family, so *when you go to him, it seems you are going to beg.* She says they are not like Europeans, who move out from their parents by the age of eighteen, go to college, and stay in their own flat with help from the government. Mrs. Offei's own son who is twenty-seven years old is living with her and her husband since he came back from his studies in the USA and after finishing his national service. *He stays with us. So, why should he go and forget about us? People are still in need of others.* She denotes that the system in Ghana is different and do not want a change just *because they are doing it in America, they do it in Britain.* Rev. Kwapong does not think that influences as far as individualization is a problem in Akropong. *For us here it's not a problem, but I know that for those in the cities, yes it is. But for us here; we all want to live traditionally.* He says that the community is strong enough. When there is a funeral, for example, people come to support and mourn together with the family, even though they were not close friends with the deceased.

When it comes to the family, Rev. Kwapong thinks that it has a bigger role to play influencing people's moral conduct, than the church has. There is where marriage begins, there is where children grows up, he says, but continues on the issue, that *it is interesting that if they are in the church and they are well informed, at least they are able to do better also in the family.* When asking about counseling, whether it is first of all a family issue or if it is something that the church deals with, he says that for some it is a family issue, others come to church when they are not able to solve problems or sort things out by themselves. He says that the community has a lot of respect for the church. *Though some people may be offended, but generally something happens when somebody come to tell me, even though they feel embarrassed about it, they really give respect to me.* Mrs. Offei says that when it comes to marriages it is often a family issue. Living in a community where people know each other, opinions and pieces of advice from the family are important. It is most important that the families agree, but then it is also a church issue. The church gives the couple a marriage counselor who will be with them and guiding them for a couple of months.

4.2 Musama Disco Christo Church, Abeka⁹⁶

The reason why I present Musama Disco Christo Church (MDCC) as number two in my study, after the Presbyterian Church, is that it is one of the African Indigenous Churches, AICs.⁹⁷ One of the reasons why the African Indigenous Churches emerged was namely a longing in several Africans to find a mode of religious expressions that was conscious of the African culture. The “independency reflects a rebellion against a Christianity that had become ‘over-Europeanised’”.⁹⁸ Musama Disco Christo Church will be an interesting contrast to both the historic Presbyterian Church and to the next and last church in my study, Global Revival Ministries.

In this church I interviewed:

Rev. Emmanuel Kpakpo, Pastor of MDCC Church in Abeka, Accra.

Mr. Kweku Essel-Amoah, Elder of MDCC, Abeka, Accra. He is also a member of the executive committee of the MDCC.

Abeka is a village in the suburbs of Accra. The church in Abeka is part of the Accra branch of the Musama Disco Christo Church. In a large building, which was built only a few years ago, the congregation has its meetings. The Abeka station, as it is called, has currently 250 members and around 60-65 percent of them are 20-30 years old. About 80 to 150 people attend the services on Sunday mornings. The big hall, built of stones, is furnished with plastic chairs and on the wall there is a picture of the founder of the church. When I visited a small Musama Disco Christo Church in a village close to Akropong, I also noticed a picture of a white Jesus on the wall. Some people are wearing typical African clothes and some women are covering their hair, others wear suits and other Western inspired clothes.

In the small Musama Disco Christo Church in the village close to Akropong, they used only drums and tambourines in the worship. At this service in Abeka, however, the musical instruments that are used are predominantly “European drums”, as Mr. Essel-Amoah calls them, electrical guitar and keyboards. But they do have African drums, he says, which they are using on official occasions, especially on national level on special anniversaries. These are purely African drums with certain names and of different sizes that are also used on traditional Ghanaian festivals. What Mr. Essel-Amoah also thinks distinguishes MDCC is the use of dance in worship. The founder of the church was from the Methodist Church, which was founded by Europeans. Consequently, they preferred the organs and the slow march that stands for. However, MDCC introduced an expressive way of African dance into the church that the Methodists were not comfortable with. That was, according to Mr. Essel-Amoah, one of the reasons why the founder of MDCC had to leave the Methodist church. Rev. Kpakpo explains the African way of worship by *the way we Africans understood God is the way we worship him*. Mr. Essel-Amoah thinks that being the first indigenous African Church; they had the pressure to prove that they as Africans were capable of expressing themselves religiously. *For Christ is not a foreigner, because we do not see Christ as a foreign body somewhere, some white or some dark person somewhere. We see Christ in the African way of*

⁹⁶ Interviews in this chapter are held with Mr. Kweku Essel-Amoah, 2007-11-21, p. 1-7 and Rev. Emmanuel Kpakpo, 2007-12-02, p. 1-5.

⁹⁷ See the categories of Ghanaian churches listed by Cephas N. Omenyo under chapter 2.2 The Church in Ghana.

⁹⁸ Ayegboyin, 1997, p. 24.

worship. He accentuate that it is not a question of rejecting what is good from Europe. The idea is to 'marry' it with the African way. He is happy about the fact that as more African based churches started coming up with the African way of worship, also the mainline churches have incorporated African lyrics, singing and dancing into their worship. Rev. Kpakpo describes how people that are sometimes not even close to the church premises still can tell what is Musama Disco Christo Church, because of the music and the way they are singing. Nevertheless, Rev. Kpakpo says that people today enjoy the Western style even more than the African concept of music. *Even my own church, he says, is using European instruments in worshipping. While in the olden days we used these local drums. So at times we are using the 'dondo', then we leave the European instruments for some periods, then we put it back.*

The language that is predominantly used in MDCC is Fante. The reason for that, even though the church in Abeka is located in a Ga speaking area, is that the first church was founded in a Fante area in the Central Region in Ghana, Rev. Kpakpo explains. The congregation itself was from the beginning basically made up of a lot of villages and as people were not well educated, using English would cause problems. The people that are going to the seminary that the church is running are not always well educated and fluent in English. Therefore they are trained in the Fante language. Mr. Essel-Amoah stresses that language is a great, powerful tool for communication. *To be able to communicate with sub villages you must use a medium that you are a matter of, so preaching, singing and expressing yourself in your mother tongue is the best.* Rev. Kpakpo thinks that when leading people to Christ, it is important to express himself in the language which people understand so they do not misunderstand. Even though people understand English, he thinks that it is important to explain theological terms in the mother tongue to really make sure that people get it and know the meaning. It is important that everybody can enjoy the sermon. MDCC also have what they call linguists, at national level and in some churches. The linguist is a spokesperson, an interpreter, for the church and explains whatever is decided and applies it to life, using the local language and highlighting with proverbs. For example when the executive committee meets, the linguist informs the church and explains to people what is said and decided.

The MDCC has a sub committee consisting of selected members who are in charge of counseling. There are for example experts on finances, spiritual issues and marriages. Before entering into marriage couples must meet the counseling committee for three months to see if they will tie to each other and in order for them to find out each other's beliefs. Speaking about counseling, Mr. Essel-Amoah stresses the importance of the family. In case of marriage, the families have to approve first of all. He says that the one thing that distinguishes MDCC from for example new established Pentecostal and Charismatic churches is that the MDCC believe in the importance of the family. *We believe that the family holds together the church.* He says that they will not bless any marriage that will not be blessed or assorted by the family, because they think that the families are very important.

Mr. Essel-Amoah thinks that one of the reasons why Christianity is so strong in Africa is because of the communality that is a part of the African society. The communal existence is very important. However, Mr. Essel-Amoah states that one of the aspects of the Western culture that is gradually creeping into the Ghanaian community, as well as into the church, is the individualistic view. In Africa they used to have the extended family, but it is breaking up, step by step, into nuclear families. He thinks that what the church can do about it is to reverse to the roots. *By going back to what made us (...) and see the African way to live.*

Mr. Essel-Amoah believes that influencing people's moral conduct is first of all up to the parents. He says that politically they are talking about the teacher's responsibilities and matters of teaching morality in school, but he strongly believes that it should start in the house. But he does not neglect the role of the church in the moral upbringing of people. A few years ago the churches were fighting the government about the quality in religious and moral education. As a result of that, in the year 2000, the government renewed a basic reform about that subject and said that moral upbringing should be taken into the church room. Rev. Kpakpo, however, stresses the church's responsibility to teach people to live Christ-like lives, so that people around see that they are believers and followers of Christ. It is important, he thinks, to teach members that what they are doing, their moral life, is seen by people around them. He quotes Paul who tells Timothy in 2 Tim 2:15 *[to] show yourself approved*.

Rev. Kpakpo explains that MDCC holds the African tradition high. They want Africans to be bodily Africans. *Therefore Jesus is in every culture, Jesus is in African culture, Jesus is in African traditions*. Whatever tradition that is adopted into church, cultural or biblical, they make sure everybody understand the reason why and pick quotations in Scripture to support it. Mr. Essel-Amoah accentuates that human beings are not born into a vacuum. People are born into a community with certain values that they cannot go away with. That is why MDCC does not want to compromise on the African values that they are using, for example their singing, dancing, mode of worship, and way of dressing. He thinks that Western fashion and dressing has a negative influence on the African way of fashion and also invades the church with short skirts. In MDCC, however, he explains that they dress in an African way, every Sunday, and make it ok. This is in contrast to other churches that he thinks deprave the African mode of dressing. Nevertheless, he admits that there is a strong influence from the Western way of doing things, not only on the entire Ghanaian society, but also in church. He exemplifies this by mentioning certain Charismatic churches where he can enter and wonder whether it is an African church with their American mode of worship and way of dressing. He says that at MDCC the Western influences is seen more in technology than in the mode of worship. *But when it comes to way of preaching, dancing, and singing we are committed to do it in an African way, the way we know best*. Every year in August, MDCC has its national anniversary. During that time, he explains, the head of the church is carried in a baldachin, just like the King and Queen Mother in the traditional Ghanaian festivals, *so the African is so much in that (...) those things we are not compromising*. Mr. Essel-Amoah explains that they are incorporating certain ways and values. Everything they do, whether it is an African mode or not, they see it as a part of Christianity. They have made a point of the fact that Christ is not a foreigner. Christianity is not a foreign religion; it is not only about Western culture. *Christ has moved to Africa and is no more a foreigner*.

4.3 Global Revival Ministries, Accra⁹⁹

Global Revival Ministries (GRM) was founded in 1983 by Rev. Dr. Robert Ampiah-Kwofi. The reason why I chose a church like this is that it goes under the category of Neo-Pentecostal Churches/Charismatic Churches.¹⁰⁰ Churches in this category were founded in the 1960s-

⁹⁹ Interviews in this chapter are held with Rev. John Neeman-Quarshie, 2007-11-21a, p. 1-9 and Mrs. Theresa Bando, 2007-11-25, p. 1-7 when nothing else is noted.

¹⁰⁰ See the categories of Ghanaian churches listed by Cephas N. Omenyo under chapter 2.2 The Church in Ghana.

1980s and are distinguished by features such as their predominantly youth membership, their predominantly use of English language and their adoption of American Pentecostal worship styles in terms of music, preaching etc.¹⁰¹

In Global Revival Ministries I interviewed:

Rev. John Neeman-Quarshie, one of the pastors of GRM.

Mrs. Theresa Bando, one of the leaders at the Counseling Department of GRM.

The congregation has now about 1 500 registered members and about 800 attendants on an average Sunday morning service. Out of the 1 500 registered members, there are about twenty who are aged 60 and above. Accra, which is the capital of Ghana, has a population of about 2 million people.¹⁰² Most of the members are youths; students in secondary schools and universities. The services are held in Baden-Powell Hall, which is a big hall in central Accra. They are renting it, but planning and raising money for their own building with room also for offices.

Since we arrived a little late to the service, which starts at eight in the morning, we got to sit outside the crowded hall, on plastic chairs under a canopy. On a couple of TV screens on the wall, everybody who was sitting outside was able to follow the service going on inside. Among the people attending church there were a lot of people wearing suits and dresses that are typical Western kind of clothes and some women were wearing trousers. Rev. Neeman-Quarshie, who is one of about ten pastors at GRM, explains that *Christianity always affects culture*. Civilization was connected to Christianity and the missionaries brought their way of dressing. And because of westernization and globalization and through media, African grooming in general has changed over the years. Instead of wearing big shorts called 'dakoto' for men and the typical dress called 'kabaa' for women, people are wearing Western dresses and suits. He says that people think that when you do not wear suits, you are not dressed. And *when you do not wear suits, you are not looked like 'gentlemen like'*. But, he continues, *the suit is a culture and the suit is made because of the Western topography; because of their cold weather. (...) But our weather is hot, we do not need suits here*. However, the most important to Christians is to dress decently and not to expose their bodies, no matter what kind of clothes they are wearing. *Christianity is cultureless, but a Christian has to groom your hair and shave (...) look attractive... that is Christianity*.

The music played at the services at GRM is mostly English songs from America. *We have praises and worship songs with a flow*, says Mrs. Theresa Bando, who is one of the leaders at the counseling department, *Bible songs, clapping your hands, dance with the tambourines, using the drums*. Looking at the stage up front, there are a set of "European drums", keyboards, and electrical guitars. Rev. Neeman-Quarshie describes the style of music as *youth incline. It is very active; it is much attracting to the youths (...) a lot of emotionalism and passion*. He thinks that Western style of music stirs people's emotions, so they are not really going for the traditional music again. He says that he does not have a problem with drumming, but what he wants to analyze is the purpose of the drumming. Nevertheless, drumming is much connected to worship of ancestors, seemed to be fetish and pagan and *the modern Christian does not think this is appealing to him*.

¹⁰¹ Omenyo, 2002, p. 96.

¹⁰² *Länder i fickformat, Ghana*, 2004, p. 3 (Population of the year of 2000).

All services in GRM are held in English. Most know English, says Mrs. Bandoh, but there are a few, about ten people, who do not. For them there are chairs placed outside, under the canopy and there is a woman translating for them into Ga, which is the dominant language in the Greater Accra region. Mrs. Bandoh herself is a graduate and there are words that she, through her education, only knows in English. *If you are educated you go by the English, there is nothing wrong with that.* There are churches, she explains, where they have a translator in the pulpit, next to the pastor. But at GRM they think that is a waste of time. *We must leave by ten o'clock when we close and we can all go home and do whatever we have to for the day,* says Mrs. Bandoh. When asking Rev. Neeman-Quarshie what language is dominant in church services, he answers that: *because it is urban it is English.* Occasionally there is interjection of Twi or Ga, but ninety-eight or ninety-nine percent is English. Still, he thinks that it is very important to use the local language when singing and preaching. *There is a way of identifying with somebody when you speak in your mother tongue, [rather] than in a foreign language. But we, the charismatics, have failed because we had our education in the English.* Moreover, Rev. Neeman-Quarshie thinks that the fact that English is the official language of Ghana, affects their cultural identity, since language is an important part of the culture. He thinks that by using another language, *you accept other aspects of [that language's] culture that will erode your culture.* That is why he likes the Japanese and other Asian countries, who have *accepted their technology but not the last part.* They have kept their own languages as the official ones, though the English is their second. But because of what he thinks is their low self identity, African countries have lost their language and accepted the Western language as the first and official language. In one way it has unified them, but it has also made them accept the Western culture.

In Accra, which is the biggest city and the capital of Ghana, the extended family system is not as important as in other parts of the country, Rev. Neeman-Quarshie explains. *It's independent life, you have to hold on to survive.* He is aware of the individualistic worldview of the Western world and stresses that there are merits and demerits of both of them. *Individualism makes you very hard working.*¹⁰³ But at the same time he thinks that it isolates people and if they suffer emotionally, they will suffer alone. He also mentions Africans who have been travelling abroad and felt the bad sides of individualism. It is too much for them not being able to interact with their neighbors, since they do not have a relationship. *Africa is a world of relationship our communal system is very good, it makes us the one another's keeper,*¹⁰⁴ says Rev. Neeman-Quarshie. On the other hand, he thinks that the extended family system can make people become lazy. *He will get food to eat because an uncle or a relative will help him to eat.* In Ghana they now have a social welfare system and a pension scheme to pay, *so it's like now government is taking care. In that way we are becoming westernized gradually.*¹⁰⁵ Neeman-Quarshie does not think it is all bad, but to the extreme it is. Also as a Christian, he believes there need to be a balance. He thinks that a Christian has to live his or her individual life and proceed as an individual, even though it does not mean to forget about one's neighbor. *You must live your own life. 'Cause when you come to church and it's preached and you see that you have authority and you are under war and an attack in a spirit, who will fight it for you?*¹⁰⁶ Also Mrs. Bandoh expresses that there are some problems with

¹⁰³ Interview with Rev. John Neeman-Quarshie, 2007-11-21b, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Rev. John Neeman-Quarshie, 2007-11-21b, p. 4.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

the extended family system. *To some extent, we Africans believe in togetherness.* She says that she would rather leave her kids with a niece than to bring a house maid that they are not related to. That makes the extended family very important. She explains that she would not hesitate to give help if someone needs help and tells about her husband's nephew who is staying with them for the moment, while waiting for his own apartment. But the bad side is that sometimes people are taken care of, even though they are thirty years old or more, because the extended family is supposed to support each other. Therefore she stresses that there is a balance, which she says can also be seen in the Bible. *God believes in families, clans. There is the tribe of Judah, tribe of... you know.* She still thinks, though, that the family system sometimes can be problematic and wants a balanced view of it.

When people need counseling they go to one of the pastors and talk to them or is sent on to someone else in the church that has better insight in the matter that is brought up. Couples who are going to marry get special counseling for about four to six months to get prepared for marriage. Rev. Neeman-Quarshie says that there are maybe a few families that have such bold relationships among themselves, so they do not have to see a pastor. Instead they do that kind of counseling within the family. But normally, he explains, people go to the pastor.

Before finishing, Rev. Neeman-Quarshie stresses that every culture has positive and negative elements. *So all you know is that you have to discourage the negative elements and improve on your positive elements. And speed your technology. But scientificity [sic] does not mean what is good in your culture can't pick up. (...) This thing means there is something in somebody's culture that you want to learn and you learn it. But you do not need to learn the 'fist' of the other person's culture.*

5. Analysis

In this part of my paper I will summarize the general and theoretical backgrounds and the empirical findings and try to analyze how the different churches express African cultural tradition and African modernity. Through visiting and observing the different churches and interviewing people, I have noticed that African cultural tradition and African modernity are expressed in different ways and with different intentions. Many of these differences seem to be based on their historical backgrounds. I will now also look at how they, in the churches, reflect upon the African cultural tradition and African modernity and how they deal with the tension between them.

I will look into the topics, and use the same order, as they are described in chapter 3.1. There are the aesthetical values, the use of the language and the communal, individualistic and family values.

5.1 Aesthetical values

Musama Disco Christo Church was founded out of a longing in Africans to find a mode of religious expressions that was conscious of the African culture. The independency they wanted reflects a rebellion against a Christianity that had become ‘over-Europeanised’. That rebellion has definitely formed their way of expressing themselves in their context. Maybe one of the most distinct features of the African cultural traditions expressed by them is the way they are singing and dancing and also their use of traditional drums. Mr. Essel-Amoah stresses that *when it comes to way of preaching, dancing, and singing we are convicted to do it in an African way, the way we know best*. Reflecting on the issue, he accentuates that born into a community people have to go with the values that they have in their specific culture. That is why MDCC does not want to compromise on the ways they express themselves. When Gyekye explains the aesthetic values of the African culture, including music and dancing, he points out the functional and symbolic aspects. Mr. Essel-Amoah describes the use of drums and other cultural features on the national anniversary of MDCC, which is a festival that is similar to the traditional Ghanaian festivals. The similarity to those festivals shows that there are symbolic aspects in their aesthetical expressions. However, it seems like these features are kept mostly on the national level and on special occasions. Observing the Sunday morning service that I visited, I noticed that they were not using their traditional drums, but electrical instruments and what they call “European drums”. Moreover, Rev. Kpakpo says in the interview that people today, even in his own church, enjoy the Western style even more than the African style of music. Therefore they are using “European instruments” in worshipping. At times, though, they put them away to the benefit of the local drums for some periods.

Whether the mainline churches were most affected by the indigenous churches’ introducing of African music and dancing in rebellion against the “over-Europeanized” Christianity, as stated by Rev. Oduro, or by the entry of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Ghana in the 1950s and 60s, as stated by Rev. Kwabong, is hard to tell for sure. Maybe both were catalysts in the change of the way of expressions in the Presbyterian Church. Nevertheless, both Mrs. Offei and Rev. Kwabong accentuate that the attitudes towards the African cultural tradition had to change. The typical African way of doing things appealed more to people and the PCG had to deal with it at a national level. What was hardest to accept was the fact that people wanted to bring drums into the church. But now they can do that, Rev. Kwabong explains, because they know that it is not fetish and that there is no idolatry in the playing of drums. The reason why the PCG, as well as other mainline churches, until a few decades ago was

limited to European ways of expressions was that the European missionaries could not distinguish what was purely culture and what had to do with the religious rituals. Therefore everything African and everything indigenous were abandoned. When Gyekye describes the notion of cultural tradition, he stresses that every encounter between different traditions will result in one tradition borrowing elements from another, voluntarily or through forcible imposition of some sort.

But in order for the adopted elements of the alien tradition to be most beneficial to an indigenous tradition, the latter will have to shape, assimilate, and appropriate them not only to suit its ideals, purposes, and aspirations but also to function effectively and with success.¹⁰⁷

Otherwise people will be confused by its practices and institutions and they will only be in the margin of the tradition. It seems like that is the case with the European expressions in the PCG. That is an example of cultural assimilation that did not function effectively and made people find themselves in the peripheries of the tradition. In those cases, says Gyekye, it cannot be predicted for how long the tradition will endure in its new cultural environment, since the people may not appreciate it and may therefore hardly have any commitment to it.

Global Revival Ministries, which is a fairly new Charismatic Church in the urban area of Accra, the capital of Ghana, is not using any traditional drums in their music. Even though Rev. Neeman-Quarshie does not have any problem with drumming, depending on the purpose of it, he still thinks that it is much connected to worship of ancestors and that people think of it as fetish. He thinks that the modern Christian does not find it appealing, and that the Western style of music stirs people's emotion so that they not really want to go for the traditional music again. Interestingly, there are similar reflections as the ones from Musama Disco Christo Church, where they also say that people today tend to enjoy the Western style of music more than the African. The difference is that MDCC seem to be trying hard to hold symbolically on to the African style, maybe due to their background of rebellious independency from the "Europeanized Christianity".

As another aesthetical value in the African culture, dressing is a feature that is similar to that of music and dancing. The same pattern of reflecting on the feature of music and dancing could also be seen on the reflections on dressing. According to Rev. Kwapong the leadership's understanding of African traditional dressing has changed and is still changing in the PCG. Only a few years ago it would have been impossible for him, as a pastor, to wear traditional clothes in the church. In the early twentieth century a teacher was, according to Cephas N. Omenyo even banned from preaching in the church in Akropong because he entered the pulpit wearing a traditional cloth. Omenyo describes that "Orthodoxy was then determined by how well one was loyal to the traditions and patterns that had been laid down by the missionaries and not how faithful one was in incarnating the Scripture into the cultural context."¹⁰⁸

Also in MDCC the understanding of dressing and traditional clothes are similar to the understanding of features like music and dancing. Mr. Essel-Amoah thinks that Western fashion has a negative influence on the African way of fashion with for example short skirts. What he is expressing by that is seen in Gyekye's explanation of the aesthetical value of

¹⁰⁷ Gyekye, 1997, p. 224.

¹⁰⁸ Omenyo, 2002, p. 64.

dress in African culture. According to that, it is important to dress appropriate to the occasion and tight and short dresses worn by women are not considered appropriate. According to Mr. Essel-Amoah people of MDCC dress in an African way every Sunday and are okay with that. However, even though there are more of African traditional clothes in MDCC than at GRM, I did see Western types of dressing as well.

GRM is probably a church in the category of Charismatic churches which Mr. Essel-Amoah says one can enter and wonder whether it is an African church with their American mode of worship and way of dressing. When visiting GRM, I can understand his point of view, though I do not find their dressing inappropriate. Most people there do not wear traditional clothes, but suits and dresses that look more Western. Reflecting on way of dressing, Rev. Neeman-Quarshie thinks that the most important to Christians is to dress decently and not to expose their bodies, no matter what kind of clothes they are wearing. Even though he thinks that suits are made because of Western topography with the cold weather, and therefore not needed in Africa, he says that people think that wearing a suit looks more gentlemen like and civilized.

5.2 Language

Even though Gyekye does not say much about the use of local languages in his books, he says that language is a very important element in the complexity of a culture; it is “a vehicle of culture”¹⁰⁹. In Ghana there are several people groups and also languages throughout the nation. Therefore the use of English as an official language is uniting them. However, English is not the mother tongue of people in Ghana and the question is how significant that is in preaching and evangelizing. In contrast to the Koran, which is preferably read in Arabic, the Bible is translated into several languages and is still being translated into languages that do not yet have their own translation. When Presbyterian missionaries first came to Ghana, one of the most important things to accomplish was to learn the local language, develop it into writing and make a translation of the Bible. Together with indigenous collaborators, the missionaries put a lot of effort and hard work into the Twi and Ga languages in the mid-nineteenth century. The local language is still very important in the PCG. Except for some comments in English when they have visitors, Mrs. Offei explains that services are held in Twi. Preaching, singing and everything is in the local language. Rev. Kwapong’s reflection on the issue is that even though English is not a bad thing, it is important to use the local language. The fact is that if people well understand the language and the different expressions that are used, the message communicates better to their hearts.

Reflecting on the English language versus the use of local language, Rev. Neeman-Quarshie at GRM thinks that language is an important part of the culture. By using another language they accept other aspects of the culture as well. There are aspects that are connected to the foreign language that he thinks might erode their own culture. That is why he likes the way some Asian countries have become modern, without accepting the English language. Nevertheless, GRM holds all their services in English. Talking to Mrs. Bandoh, it seems like it is a practical thing. Most people understand it and are very familiar to it since they are educated. There are a few people at GRM who need translation and they get it through a woman interpreting to them in a small group. She thinks that having a translator next to the pastor in the pulpit, would be a waste of time. The reason why they are using the English

¹⁰⁹ Gyekye, 1997, p. 93.

language is because they are located in an urban area, says Rev. Neeman-Quarshie. Still, he thinks that preaching in the local language is very important. Using the mother tongue is a way of identifying with somebody in a way one cannot do in a foreign language. However, he says, the charismatics have failed to do that since they have their pastoral education in English.

Since the first MDCC was founded in an area where Fante was the local language, the church is still using it at a national level. They also use it in the local churches, even if they are located, for example, in a Ga speaking area. One of the reasons for that is merely a practical reason. Many people in MDCC are not that well educated. Even the seminary that is run by the Church therefore needs to have their training in the Fante language. However, Rev. Kpakpo's reflection on the issue is that when leading people out of ignorance it is important that he is using a language which people fully understand. Even if people understand English, he thinks that it is important to explain theological terms in the mother tongue to really make sure that people get the message. The MDCC has people in church, called linguists, who explain things that have been decided on board meetings. Their task is to apply these things to life, in order for people to understand the meaning.

It seems like almost everybody in the different churches are reflecting on the notion of language, thinking that the local language is a very important thing to keep up with. However, Rev. Neeman-Quarshie admits that GRM, as well as other Charismatic churches have failed on that, since they have their pastoral education in English. Even though Neeman-Quarshie, when reflecting on it, thinks that the local language is important, the GRM is not using it. Mrs. Bando, though, seems to think that the use of English is a practical thing and she does not mention any negative effects about it.

5.3 Communal, individualistic and family values

Gyekye stresses that communal values are greatly emphasized in African society. He mentions that many writers on Africa have remarked the "sense of community that characterizes social relations among individual members".¹¹⁰ However, he accentuates that the communal system does not exclude individualistic values, and stresses the importance of a balance between the two. He fears, though, that the balance could be disturbed by urbanization and socio-economic situations and tilt in favor of individualism.

GRM seem to be affected by the fact that it is a church in urban Accra. In Accra, the extended family system is not as important as in other parts of the country, says Rev. Neeman-Quarshie. There is an independent lifestyle and people have to hold on to survive. That, on the other hand, connects to what he thinks is a merit in the individualistic worldview; that it makes people hard working instead of taking advantage of the extended family system where they are supposed to support each other. However, he thinks that the communal system which makes them one another's keeper is good, to some extent. Also as a Christian, he believes in a balance. A Christian has to live his or her individual life, proceed as an individual and understand the authority that he or she has on his or her own life, without forgetting about the neighbor. Also Mrs. Bando stresses the importance of balance between the communal and the individualistic values. Even though she would not hesitate to help someone in need,

¹¹⁰ Gyekye, 1996, p. 35.

mentioning a relative who just temporarily stays with her and her nuclear family, she thinks that the extended family system sometimes can be very problematic.

In contrast, Mr. Essel-Amoah at MDCC does not reflect upon the importance of a balanced view between the two values. He does not like the individualistic aspect of Western culture that is gradually creeping into the Ghanaian community, as well as into the church. One of the effects that it has is that the extended family system is breaking up into a nuclear family system. He thinks that the church needs to deal with it by going back to its roots; to the African way of life. Mr Essel-Amoah thinks that the communality, which is a part of the African society, probably is a reason to why Christianity is still strong in Africa.

On this issue of communality and individualism, it seems like these two churches are dealing with the tension between culture and modernity in different ways. Looking at what Gyekye says about attitudes toward a cultural tradition and modernity in chapter 3.3, he presents different attitudes. Referring to the Akan word '*Sankofa*', meaning '*to return for it*', he describes the view of those who think that it is important for Africa, in creating their own modernity, to go back to the African roots. Even though I do not want to claim to make a complete analysis of their different views, I can see that GRM and MDCC express different views. Mr. Essel-Amoah at MDCC expresses some kind of 'Sankofaism' as Gyekye names it, when he thinks that Church needs to go back to its African roots. Whether it is a naïve ("a wholesale and indiscriminate praise for the African cultural heritage"¹¹¹) or a critical form ("an objective and unemotional approach"¹¹²), I cannot determine through this brief study, though. However, his view seems to be in contrast with those of GRM, who want a more balanced view of the communal values and the extended family system.

Gyekye's fear of a disturbed balance between the communal values and the individualistic values seems to be confirmed by Rev. Kwapong in CPC in Akropong. The fear stated by Gyekye is that urbanization tends to affect the balance in favor of individualism. Rev. Kwapong thinks that the influence of individualization is not a problem in Akropong, which is a small town with a population of about 10 000 people. It is a problem for those in the cities, but in Akropong they all want to live traditionally, he says. Mrs. Offei says there is a change in the extended family system, because of the influences from Western culture, which she does not like. She says that people are still in need of others and she does not want to change just because of the way they are doing things in America or in Britain. As an example, she tells about her own son, twenty-seven years old, who still lives with her and her husband. Gyekye mentions about that in his description of African family values. He says that children are generally expected to live in the family house until they marry, even if they are over eighteen years old. Moreover, on the notion of traditional African family values, he says that parents, because they consider themselves as having more experiences than their children, always want to offer advice and guidance.

Rev. Oduro, Principal of Good News Theological College and Seminary, thinks that one reason why the Charismatic churches do not have many members that are of old age, is that they often have young pastors who are taking over the roles of counseling from the old generation. He thinks that elderly people do not feel comfortable with that. The fact is that out

¹¹¹ Gyekye, 1996, p. 73.

¹¹² Gyekye, 1996, p. 73.

of 1 500 members, GRM has only about twenty members who are 60 years and older. There could, however, be other reasons to that fact, as well. MDCC in Abeka has also mostly young members, even though they stress the importance of the family. The emphasis on family is, however, something that Mr. Essel-Amoah in MDCC thinks is one thing that distinguishes them from newly established Charismatic churches. In case of marriage, for example, he stresses the importance of the approval and blessing from the families.

5.4 Additional observations

Rev. Oduro at Good News Theological College and Seminary stresses some contributions that the AICs have made to African Christianity. One of them is the contribution of architecture of Christian worship centers. When the mainline churches started to raise church buildings, they were influenced by European architecture. That is notably seen in Christ Presbyterian Church, Akropong. The church which was completed in 1868 has a European style. Not only the way it looks on the outside, but also the interior and the decorations have European influences. On the pictures on the walls and on the altarpiece, Jesus and his disciples are all white. Some people find it difficult, says Rev. Kwapong, because they have a hard time identifying themselves with *an unknown person, somebody they do not know*.¹¹³

MDCC in Abeka has simple interiors in a big, fairly new hall. The small MDCC which I visited in a village close to Akropong, had pictures of Jesus on the walls, as well. However, also on those, he was white. GRM is also gathering in a big hall, and the stage reminds me of those of American Charismatic churches' by the way they are furnished, decorated and equipped.

Both the MDCC in Abeka and the one in the small village were gathering in buildings that are not necessarily taken for churches. The buildings do not at all remind of any European looking churches and merge well into their environments. Concerning their pictures of the white Jesus, though, they have not consequently contributed to that change they seem to strive for by the statement by Mr. Kweku Essel-Amoah that *Christ has moved to Africa and is no more a foreigner*.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Interview with Rev. George Kwapong, 2007-12-03, p. 5.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Rev. Kweku Essel-Amoah, 2007-11-25, p. 6.

6. Concluding Discussion

After presenting the results of my empirical findings, brought together with the general and theoretical backgrounds, in the previous chapter, I will now move on to a concluding discussion around my main research question: How do different churches in Ghana relate to African cultural tradition and to African modernity?

The three different churches in the study are descended from various historical backgrounds. I think that their historical background is what affects them the most in how they relate to African cultural tradition and to African modernity.

First, we have the Presbyterian Church which was founded by European missionaries in the nineteenth century. In the early history of PCG, when the missionaries first came to Ghana, it was important to encounter the African culture properly and they made big efforts in learning their local language. However, the missionaries brought beliefs, values and ideas from their part of the world that the church later on has had to deal with. Some African cultural traditions have been re-evaluated in church, like features of aesthetical values. Others have been kept through history, like the communal values and family values. These are, on the other hand, challenged today by individualistic values that are invading the Ghanaian society through globalization and urbanization. Even though the people interviewed in Christ Presbyterian Church do not see it as an impending threat on the church in Akropong, they do not like the change and see it as a risk in the urban areas.

Musama Disco Christo Church was founded in the early twentieth century out of a longing to go back to the African roots. As they did not like the European style of the historical churches, they introduced African cultural features into the church. Their way of being a church has probably, together with other AICs, contributed a lot to African Christianity. They are still emphasizing the African cultural tradition and trying to hold on to it. Nevertheless, they are remarkably affected by Western modernity regarding for example the aesthetical values. How far are they able to strive to keep the cultural traditions, so that those features are not only expressed on special occasions at national level? However, they think that it is important that the church in modern Africa goes back to the African roots. Mr. Essel-Amoah thinks that one of the reasons why Christianity is so strong in Africa is because of the communal values of the African society.

Founded twenty-five years ago, Global Revival Ministries does not have any old foreign traditions to deal with, like the Presbyterian Church. Neither were they founded in strive for Africanness, like Musama Disco Christo Church. In contrast, they do not seem to express much of African aesthetical features and relate to African culture with a little more of suspicion. Also the communal and individualistic values are reflected on, in a way that shows that they are relating to African modernity differently from the others. They do not seem to think that going back to the African roots is the way for the church in African modernity. They seem not to fear the individualistic worldview as much as the others.

It is interesting to see also how the historical backgrounds of the churches bring forth the different processes within the churches. In the Presbyterian Church the African way of worshipping was introduced in the 1950s and 60s as a result of people wanting that style of music instead of the European organ style of hymns. (Interesting to note is that this was also the time of political and ecclesiastical independence in Ghana.) On the other hand, Musama Disco Christo Church and Global Revival Ministries both have other historical backgrounds

and therefore have different processes within the churches. They both stress the fact that people today like Western style of music better than the African mode. However, while Musama Disco Christo Church tries to hold on to the African tradition, Global Revival Ministries accommodates to what people like.

After having done the study and written the paper, there are more topics coming to my mind that would have been interesting to have included. For example, it would have been interesting to see how women in ministry are viewed in African cultural tradition and modernity perspectives. Another aspect that is not a part of this predominantly sociological study, which could be of interest in further studies, is the aspect of Biblical traditions connected to the African cultural tradition and modernity. It would also be interesting to look further into factors that are important for the growth of Christianity in Africa in the view of tradition and modernity. Furthermore, the concept of music has in this essay only been looked at as an aesthetical value. However, music also includes theology. It would be an interesting topic of further studies to study the texts of the songs in the different churches, to see what kind of theology they bring about.

It is clearly seen in this study, that none of the churches is isolated from changes that are going on in the society of Ghana. Practices, ideas and values of modernity that are brought through globalization and urbanization meet those of their cultural traditions. They are either abandoned or molded into their own tradition over time. The process that is going on affects the Church as well. They have as churches to deal with the issues of different practices, ideas and values, as well as the society need to do, in creating their own modernity.

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